AGIS:

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is ACTED at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

EDINBURGH.

Printed for G. HAMILTON and J. BALFOUR.

M,DCC,LVIII.

[Price One Shilling Sixpence]

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is ACTED at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

DRURY-LANE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PROLOGUE,

Written by ——

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

IF in these days of luxury and ease,
A tale from Sparta's rigid state can please;
If patriot plans a British breast can warm;
If Kings asserting liberty can charm;
If Virtue still a grateful aspect wear;
Check not at Agis' fall the gen'rous tear.
He view'd his subjects with a parent's love;
With zeal to save a sinking people strove;
Strove their chang'd hearts with glory to inflame;
To mend their Morals; and restore their name;
Till Faction rose with Murder at her side;
Then mourn'd his country; persever'd; and died.
That country once for virtue was rever'd;
Admir'd by Greece; by haughty Asia fear'd.
Then Citizens and Soldiers were the same;
And Soldiers heroes; for their wealth was fame.
Then for the Brave the Fair reserv'd her charms;
And scorn'd to clasp a coward in her arms.
The trumpet call'd; she seiz'd the sword and shield;
Array'd in haste her husband for the field;
And sighing whisper'd in a fond embrace,
"Remember! ——death is better than disgrace."
The widow'd Mother shew'd her parting son
The race of glory which her sire had run.
"My son, thy flight alone I shall deplore.
"Return victorious!——or return no more!"
While Beauty thus with patriot zeal combin'd,
And round the laurel'd head her myrtle twin'd;

Whilst

Whilſt all conſeſt the Virtuous were the Great;
Fame, Valor, Conqueſt, grac'd the Spartan ſtate.
Her Pow'r congenial with her Virtue grew,
And Freedom's banner o'er her Phalanx flew;
But ſoon as Virtue dropt her ſick'ning head,
Fame, Valor, Conqueſt, Pow'r and Freedom fled.
May this ſad ſcene improve each Briton's heart!
Rouſe him with warmth to act a Briton's part!
Prompt him with Sparta's nobleſt ſons to vie;
To live in glory; and in freedom die!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AGIS, King of Sparta,		Mr. MOSSOP.
LYSANDER, AMPHARES,	Spartans.	Mr. GARRICK. Mr. HAVARD.
RHESUS, EUXUS,	Thracians.	Mr. HOLLAND. Mr. DAVIES.

WOMEN.

AGESISTRATA, Mother of AGIS,	Mrs. PRITCHARD.
SANDANE, Queen to LEONIDAS the exil'd King,	Mrs. YATES.
EUANTHE, an Athenian Lady,	Mrs. CIBBER.

Senators, Ephori, Meſſengers.

AGIS:

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

A court and hall, common to the palaces of the kings of SPARTA.

Enter SANDANE *attended.*

HASTEN, ORONTES, to the ſenate houſe,
And learn if rumor's voice has ſpoke the truth.
[*Exit Attendant.*
The adverſe fortune of an exil'd king
Purſues my lord. ACHAIA's generous aid
Suſtains his cauſe in vain. Why riſk a battle,
When the continuance of defenſive war
Secur'd ſucceſs and victory in Sparta?
Would I had never left thy ſplendid court,
Delightful SARDIS! to be Sparta's queen.

Enter AMPHARES.

Welcome, AMPHARES! Have the armies met?

AMPHARES.

They have. This morning, at the break of day,
The Spartan army charged ACHAIA's hoſt.
This and no more is known. Suſpenſe and fear
Poſſeſs the people; to the gates they run,
Then to their houſes: the ſtill whiſper ſpreads
Thro' juſtling multitudes the dread alarm.

SANDANE.

Alas! revenge and empire now depend
On the wild iſſue of unruly war.
What if the arms of AGIS ſhould prevail?

AMPHARES.

Although he ſhould, the toils of fate ſurround him.
Dauntleſs and firm our brave aſſociates ſtand,
And with impatience wait the deſtin'd hour
To ruſh on AGIS. This unlook'd-for battle
Is but a ſolemn prelude to the act,
Which bold conſpiracy will ſoon perform.
This day ſhall terminate the reign of AGIS,
And make, O Queen! all power in Sparta thine.

SANDANE.

I ſee that danger only whets the brave.
But yet, AMPHARES, if my lord is vanquiſh'd,
Will not the conquering army awe the city?

AMPHARES.

AGIS ſhall be the ſurety of our cauſe,
And hoſtage for our ſafety, till we wreſt
The ſword from proud LYSANDER, if he conquers;
But that I fear not much. New to command
From idle Athens the mock hero comes,
Starts up a ſoldier, and a ſtateſman too;
Each palm he claims: All honours muſt adorn
The choſen friend of viſionary AGIS.

SANDANE.

May Mars direct him ſo to guide the war,
As AGIS rules the ſtate: And mutiny

Prove

Prove there as fatal as ſedition here.

AMPHARES.

This factious ſtate muſt change its feeble form,
Waver no more beneath a double reign
Of limited, contending, uſeleſs kings.
Henceforth our monarch ſhall in Sparta rule,
As JOVE alone in high OLYMPUS reigns.

SANDANE.

So reign the mighty monarchs of the Eaſt;
And ſuch imperial power, I thought, belong'd
To Sparta's king, elſe I had ne'er been queen.
Young, and deceiv'd, I left my father's court
For Lacedæmon's miſerable ſceptre.
I did endeavour to extend its ſway,
And to ambition rous'd my Spartan lord.
But the vain pupil of the Grecian ſchools,
Unprincely AGIS, marr'd the brave deſign.
Chief of the multitude, idol and ſlave
Of the baſe populace, he led the herd,
He urged their brutal fury on the king.

AMPHARES.

And now their fury on himſelf recoils.
Like the unruly elephant, they turn,
And trample down the ranks in which they fought.

SANDANE.

That is their Liberty.

AMPHARES.

Let us employ,
And then ſuppreſs, ſuch formidable licence,
My magiſtracy now is near expir'd;
A king's reſentment and a rival's hate
Have long hung over my devoted head:
Farewel to place, to dignity, and power,
Whilſt haughty AGIS fills the Spartan throne.
I will not live obſcure in Lacedæmon,
Nor roam thro' Grecian ſtates a baniſh'd man.

If I muſt ſet, to riſe and ſhine no more,
A fiery track ſhall mark my ſetting ſun,
But AGIS comes.

SANDANE.
And AGESISTRATA.

Farewel! Succeſs attend thee, brave AMPHARES!
I will not ſtay. My ſoul diſdains to hide
Its hatred or its ſcorn. [*Exit* SANDANE.

AMPHARES.
Yet they who mean
To gratify theſe paſſions, muſt conceal them.
This day decides my fate. So let it be,
Such brief concluſion have I ever lov'd.
Aſſiſt me, Hermes, God of ſtratagems,
With artful words, to ſooth the mind of AGIS,
And turn him from the track my purpoſe holds.

Enter AGIS *and* AGESISTRATA.

AGESISTRATA.
Alas, my ſon! that bold bad man I dread!

AGIS.
He ſeems to wait us. At this hour, AMPHARES,
I think that thou of all men ſhou'dſt have ſhunn'd me.

AMPHARES.
My motive in attending here your preſence
Merits a leſs injurious ſalutation.

AGIS.
I know thy merits, and I will reward them.
Art thou not author of the woes of Sparta,
Prime mover and inflamer of ſedition?
Haſt thou not bent the power of thy high office
To the ſubverſion of the ſtate thou ſerv'ſt?
At thee this day my indignation burns.
I am diſhonour'd——

AM-

AMPHARES.

What has diſhonour'd thee?

AGIS.

Thou and thy practices: They have compell'd me
To leave the nobleſt ſtation of a prince.
In time of war where ſhould a king be found
But at his army's head? There AGIS ſtood,
When you and your preſumptuous Ephori
Requir'd my preſence here. Ungrateful Spartans!
Had you allow'd me but one other day,
Then had I fought this battle for my country,
And died or conquer'd with her braveſt ſons.

AGESISTRATA.

Peril, my ſon! dwells not in camps alone:
In cities, palaces, and courts of juſtice,
With treachery and treaſon ſhe inhabits,
Peril attended thus thou muſt encounter,
More hideous ſure than in the ranks of war.

AMPHARES.

I know my actions have incens'd the king.
But I imagin'd not that ſuch ſuſpicions
Found entertainment in your royal breaſts.

AGIS.

Haſt thou not join'd the enemies of AGIS?
Thou who waſt once his friend, inconſtant man.

AMPHARES.

I have oppos'd the counſel of a foe,
Whoſe arts depriv'd me of my prince's favour.

AGIS.

Thou haſt oppos'd LYCURGUS and the laws,
Which rais'd the name of Sparta to the ſkies.
The Delphic God inſpir'd the deep deſign:
For more than human was that power of thought
Which join'd the public to the private good,
With ſuch perfection, that each ſelfiſh paſſion
Flow'd in the channel of the common welfare,

And, like one family of ſons and ſires,
And deareſt brothers, a great people liv'd.
In peace they liv'd without or ſtrife or ſcorn,
In war they fought to conquer, or to die.
Equal and free, our happy fathers knew
No intereſt but the intereſt of the ſtate;
No gain but Sparta's glory; proud they bore
That palm aloft, and ſhar'd the high reſpect,
The admiration, which conſenting Greece
Paid to th' imperial virtue of their country.

AMPHARES.

Revolving time that ſyſtem overthrew,
And chang'd the manners and the laws of Sparta.

AGIS.

The laws have been neglected, not annull'd,
And corrupt rulers have corrupted manners.
Authority will ſoon revive the laws,
And great example yet reſtore the manners,
In ſpite of thoſe who have oppreſs'd their country,
Depriv'd the people of their antient rights,
And while the nation ſunk beneath their ſway,
Still ſtrove for power in a declining kingdom,
Still ſought for wealth in an impoveriſh'd land.
Even at this hour rapacious they perſiſt,
And, like ſome wretches in a ſtranded veſſel,
Plunder and riot in the midſt of ruin.

AMPHARES.

Mov'd by the preſent perils of the ſtate,
This ſignal hour I choſe, unknown as yet
The fortune of the field, to change my conduct,
And make an offer of my aid to AGIS.

AGIS.

If I ſhould judge the future by the paſt,
Thou muſt forgive me, tho' I doubt thy faith.

AGESISTRATA.

Yet hear him, Agis: in an hour like this
He who aſſiſtance offers is a friend.

AGIS.

This hour may yet deceive their country's foes.
I know the baſe foundation of that hope
Which makes my baffled enemies preſume.
LYSANDER's army in its ranks contains
The beſt and braveſt of Laconia's ſons;
The faction wiſh and hope defeat to them,
That Sparta's generous youth may ne'er return
To guard that freedom which has made them brave.

AMPHARES.

The boldneſs of their hopes their deeds will prove
In the aſſembly, if Achaia conquer.

AGESISTRATA.

AMPHARES, ſay, what is their utmoſt aim?

AMPHARES.

The old dependants of the exil'd king,
And all the venal members of the ſtate,
Won by SANDANE's arts and foreign gold,
Aim to reſtore LEONIDAS, who comes
With hoſtile armies to enſlave his country:
Therefore SANDANE's proffers I rejected,
Have warn'd the king, and would have ſerv'd him too;
But ſince reſentment and diſtruſt prevent me,
Neutral I ſtand; and will not ſeek that welcome
Which his more artful enemies would give.

AGIS.

Thou ſpeak'ſt more boldly than becomes AMPHARES.
Add that to the offences I forgive.
It is the ſacred maxim of my reign,
That in a prince's conſecrated breaſt
Revenge and anger ſhould not long remain.
Theſe paſſions in a king afflict the ſtate,
By driving raſh offenders to deſpair.

This

This day decides your character with me.
Now let your actions prove your words ſincere.

AMPHARES.

No other terms I aſk, and ſure I am
Ne'er ſhall AMPHARES need again forgiveneſs.

[*Exit* AMPHARES.

Manent AGIS *and* AGESISTRATA.

AGIS.

Well has he judg'd the ſeaſon of ſubmiſſion.
He will aſſiſt as if LYSANDER conquers.

AGESISTRATA.

May Jove avert the evils which I fear!
I dread the ruin of the Spartan ſtate,
And fear the downfal of our antient houſe.
The blackeſt fury of the Stygian realm,
The moſt deſtructive, is infernal Diſcord.
Bath'd in the blood of kings ſhe walks this world,
And tumbles ſtates and empires to the ground.

AGIS.

Nations oft periſh by their princes crime;
But now if Sparta's antient ſtate muſt fall,
Gods and good men ſhall witneſs for its king,
That he, with fate contended for his people,
And on the ruins of their virtue fell.

AGESISTRATA.

Think not I mean to blame your high deſign,
Age has not chang'd the tenor of my mind,
Nor pall'd my admiration of true glory.
Sprung, like thy father, from Alcides' blood,
I feel the ſpirit of the Spartan line.
Only let me adjure thee to beware
And walk with caution thro' ſurrounding perils.
Tho' thou deſpiſeſt every form of danger,
Think what a helpleſs train attends on thee,
An aged mother, and an infant ſon.

AGIS.

AGIS.

Divine Alcides will protect his race.

AGESISTRATA.

I will invoke the God; in times like theſe
Prayers are the arms of our defenceleſs ſex.
A ſpotleſs choir of matrons and of virgins,
Who o'er their country mourn, myſelf will lead
To the high temple of the ſon of Jove.
He yet may hear the voice of ſupplication,
And ſtretch his arm to ſave the Spartan ſtate.

[*Exit* AGESISTRATA.

AGIS *alone.*

Without, the enemy; within, the faction.
What ſhou'd I think? I have a thouſand thoughts
That riſe and fall like waves upon the ſhore.
I need thee now, LYSANDER! O my friend!
I lean on thee, and thou perhaps art fall'n.
Ye ever-living gods, who know my heart,
I truſt in you, for righteous are my thoughts,
All bent on raiſing up long-proſtrate Sparta.
With Sparta too, I would be proud to riſe,
And gain ſuch glory as my fathers gain'd,
When Perſia's tyrant trembled at their arms.
If in this juſt ambition I ſhould periſh,
My name ſhall go to nations yet unborn.
But I muſt change my ſtrain: EUANTHE comes.
Alas, LYSANDER, led by love and thee,
She left her Athens for this land of broils.

Enter EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

No tidings from the camp?

AGIS.

None, fair EUANTHE.
If we had loſt the field, the flying rout

Ere this had reach'd our gates.

EUANTHE.

Oh! many a dame,
Matron and virgin, tremble at this hour;
But who has cauſe like mine? The moſt forlorn
And deſolate of women is EUANTHE!
If ——

AGIS.

Small the chance of what EUANTHE fears:
In the long wars of ſtill-contending Greece
Leaders of armies have but rarely fallen.

EUANTHE.

One thing I know, and with prophetic tongue
I ſpeak it, Prince! if Sparta triumph not,
Ne'er ſhall your eyes again behold LYSANDER.
Diſdain in him is fatal as deſpair.

AGIS.

When he returns victorious from the field,
Then ſhall he hear who beſt has ſpoke his praiſe.
But I muſt leave you now: The ſenate waits me.
Hereafter we ſhall ſpeak of this, and ſmile
Like mariners who on the peaceful ſhore
Sit, and with pleaſure talk of tempeſts paſt.

[*Exit* AGIS.

EUANTHE *alone.*

This ſtedfaſt eaſe is all aſſum'd, I ſee;
He ſtaggers at the imminent event.
How dreadful is this interval to me,
Who am bereft and deſtitute of all
Thoſe aids that ſtay affliction; and muſt bear
The weight of woe that's heavier every hour.
The queen, and generous AGIS too, diſcharge
The dues of kindred with unfeigned love.
But our acquaintance is not old enough
To yield a ripen'd ſympathy, whoſe taſte
Alone can comfort ſuch a mind as mine.

Yet

Yet I repent me not in this extreme,
That I forſook my country and my friends.
They would have forc'd me to a loathed bed,
And torn me from the nobleſt of mankind.
If he ſhould fall! my love! my only love!
Shall I ſurvive thee; and return to Athens,
Be humbled there before my haughty kindred,
And hear them blame the aſhes of LYSANDER?
Forbid it, fearleſs love! forbid it, ſhame!
Forbid it, honour, and my nature's pride;
Death ſhall forbid it, for I dare to die.

Enter RHESUS.

EUANTHE.

RHESUS, Great Gods! Oh ſay, how fares LYSANDER?

RHESUS.

As well as glorious victory can make him.

EUANTHE.

Forgive my raſh deſpair, my thanks accept,
Ye gracious powers who guard his daring breaſt,
Where is he now?

RHESUS.

With AGIS in the ſenate.

EUANTHE.

Already here; bleſt be the Gods of Greece!

RHESUS.

Soon as the trumpet from purſuit recall'd
Our conquering Spartans, in the field arriv'd
A weary meſſenger, by AGIS ſent;
LYSANDER ſtrait beſpoke the royal band:
"With all the ſpeed of men to Sparta haſte,
"Chaſtiſe bold treaſon, and defend your king,"
He ſaid; and call'd to me. With a few horſe
I follow'd him: And when he ſought the king,
By his command to you I brought theſe tidings.

EUANTHE.

Moſt welcome RHESUS. But has Sparta loſt

None

None of her noble youth?

RHESUS.

No man of note
Fell in the field but one, whoſe loſs you'll mourn,
LYSANDER's friend, Athenian POLYDORUS.

EUANTHE.

Alas! alas! my joy is mix'd with woe.
Unhappy youth! on my ill-omen'd head
The blame of thy untimely death will fall.
Conducting me, thou cam'ſt to diſtant Sparta.
Fatal the honours Sparta's king beſtow'd
Upon the generous guardian of EUANTHE.

RHESUS.

Lady, the people of my native land,
The warlike Thracians, hold it vain to mourn
For men who fall in battle; ſuch they deem
The favourites of MARS, our country's God.
Thoſe they bewail who die by dire diſeaſe,
Of youth and vigor full. But moſt of all
Lament old men, who drink the bitter dregs
Of life and woe, and in decrepit age
(Extremity of dotage) wiſh to live.

EUANTHE.

Who are theſe men who near the temple ſtand?
Uncouth to me their garb, and ſtrange their arms.

RHESUS.

They are Thracians, lady.

EUANTHE.

What ſeek they here?

RHESUS.

I will accoſt the herald,
And learn his buſineſs.

EUANTHE.

To the palace, RHESUS.

I go the willing meſſenger of joy.
This victory will free the anxious Queen
From many fears. I pray thee do not tarry,
But come and tell me what yon herald bears,
And what affairs ſtill occupy the ſenate.

RHESUS.

Depend on the unwearied zeal of RHESUS.

[*Exit* RHESUS.

Manet EUANTHE.

AGIS and Sparta, and the public cares,
Detain LYSANDER from my longing eyes.
I ſee the happy change of my condition,
And ſhare the triumphs of the man I love.
But yet the ſlighteſt circumſtance creates
New fears to me. Why lingers thus LYSANDER!
My mind is not at reſt; the winds are huſh'd,
But ſtill my boſom quivers from the ſtorm.

[*Exit* EUANTHE.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

EUANTHE.

THEIR tedious council now is at an end,
And surely he will haſten to EUANTHE.
What means this clamour?

[*Shout of the People behind the Scenes.*

Ha! he comes, he comes!
Loud acclamations and the voice of joy
Proclaim the hero.

Enter LYSANDER.

LYSANDER.

O my life! my love!
To meet thee here is happineſs compleat.
The Gods have bleſt me to my utmoſt wiſh,
And brought me full of glory to EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

Thanks to the Gods who have preſerv'd LYSANDER.
Athenian Pallas ſure has heard my prayers.

LYSANDER.

And mine; for mutual is the lover's prayer.
Another deity I now invoke,
Whoſe rites the God of war has long delay'd,
With peace well-pleas'd ſhall golden Hymen come,
And crown at laſt our long eventful love.

EUANTHE.

Speak not of Hymen now: his torch for me
He ſhall not light, whilſt cruel Diſcord waves

Her

Her horrid brand, and whilſt unburied lies
Thy friend and mine, the generous POLYDORUS.

LYSANDER.

Tho' love and glory both my breaſt inſpire,
And fortune ſmiles on both, yet ſorrow finds
A place to ſit in: but 'tis temper'd ſorrow;
For never Grecian hero greater died.

EUANTHE.

He fell the victim of his love to thee;
He follow'd thee when thou forſook'ſt EUANTHE,
Left me the day I touch'd the Spartan ſhore,
Tho' royal AGIS begg'd thee to remain.

LYSANDER.

Unjuſt EUANTHE, thus to blame LYSANDER
Who ſought the field, the ſoldier of his love
As of his ſacred country: fought to gain,
With liberty, a rank and place of honour,
Such as becomes the huſband of EUANTHE;
That tender name, and names that wait upon it,
Awake emotions as implacable
To tyranny, as generous and great,
As ever ſelf-renouncing hero own'd.
When the chief aim is right, all paſſions elſe
Of noble kind impell the ſelf-ſame way.
The lover and the huſband rouſe and fire
The Spartan and the man.
Of common clay, and in one common mould
Mankind are made; but the celeſtial fire
That gives them life and ſoul, is liberty.
And I, Prometheus-like, to gain that fire
For Sparta's ſons, would brave the bolt of Jove.

EUANTHE.

To me you need not vaunt your daring mind.
Alas! LYSANDER! I am ſtill afraid
Of perils lurking in this troubled ſtate.
O leave me not again to grief and fear,

And to AMPHARES.

LYSANDER.

Leave thee to AMPHARES!

EUANTHE.

Yes, in thy abſence he did talk of love,
Boaſted his wealth, his clients, and his power;
Mention'd the ruin of thy father's fortunes,
And ſpoke contemptuous of thy raſh deſigns.

LYSANDER.

Immortal gods! Did I not hate this man
Enough?

Enter a HELOT.

Whence, HELOT?

HELOT.

Lord, from Celimene.
(*Delivers a letter.*

LYSANDER. (*reads.*)

Let AGIS *ſtand upon his guard to day,*
This to LYSANDER *from a faithful friend.*—
Helot, return, and tell the noble dame
That the remembrance of her generous mind
Shall live for ever in my grateful breaſt.

EUANTHE.

Who is this faithful friend?

LYSANDER.

A Spartan dame,
A gentle one, tho' wedded to a foe
Of royal AGIS. In her virgin ſtate
She was the conſtant and the lov'd companion
Of fair DEIDAMIA, AGIS' ſhort-liv'd queen.
Thro' all our various ſtrife, the generous dame
Preſerves the friendſhips of her early days.
This ſcroll the King muſt ſee. Farewel, EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

Its threatning ſtrain awakes my former fears.

Would

Wou'd you had been, like me, content with love,
And never left Illyſſus' flowery banks!
A fairer garland there you might have won,
Than ever war beſtow'd, the immortal wreath
Of PALLAS, queen of arts as well as arms.
But you forſook the vale, and left the ſhade
To climb ambition's bare and rocky height,
To ſtand the ſtorms and tempeſts of the world.

LYSANDER.

Your words, like melancholy muſic, take
My liſt'ning ear, and cauſe deluſive ſadneſs;
For vain the malice of our baffled foes,
And impotent will prove their laſt endeavours;
Paſt are the ſtorms and tempeſts of our fortune;
Let not EUANTHE heed the rack of clouds,
Nor dread the murmurs of the falling main.

EUANTHE.

Elate with victory, you ſcorn your foes.
I wiſh that RHESUS would return again
Before you go to AGIS.

LYSANDER.

Where is RHESUS?

EUANTHE.

I ſaw ſome warriors clad in horrid arms
Near yonder temple ſtand. Strait RHESUS knew
The garb and arms of his own native Thrace,
And, wond'ring at the ſight, went forth to learn
Who and from whence they were.

LYSANDER.

That ſhould be known.
In yonder temple ſit the Ephori,
Thoſe factious magiſtrates who love not AGIS.
If RHESUS come to you, detain him not;
Our reſolutions may on him depend.

EUANTHE.

LYSANDER, ſtay; you go again to AGIS,

Perhaps to plan new perils to thy life;
If ſo, by all that's ſacred I conjure thee
To let me know your purpoſe. Speak with me
Before you execute what you reſolve.
The image of the ſtern AMPHARES haunts me;
Need I intreat thee to defend me from him.

LYSANDER.

No! by the Gods! O urge me not EUANTHE!
Nor rouſe thoſe thoughts a lover cannot bear.
Defend thee from AMPHARES! O my fair!
When thou art wrong'd, LYSANDER lives no more!
But ſee the king.

EUANTHE.

Let caution ſhew your love.

LYSANDER *goes off towards that ſide of the ſtage where* AGIS *appears.*

Manet EUANTHE.

If nature teaches me aright to read
The mind of man, this is a powerful ſpell
To charm the daring ſpirit of LYSANDER,
And make him think of me as well as Sparta.

[*Exit* EUANTHE.

Enter AGIS.

LYSANDER.

Regard, O king, the warnings of a friend
Inſtructed in the counſels of thy foes.
Behold the ſtedfaſt faith of CELIMENE.

[*Gives the letter.*

AGIS.

I cannot think ſo baſely of the people.
For them I have unplum'd the regal power,
And deck'd their freedom with the ſpoils of kings.
If they betray me; of all creatures, man
Is moſt ungrateful to his benefactor.

The generous courſer and the faithful dog
With true affection love their gentle maſter;
Nay even the heavy ox, the ſtubborn mule,
Dulleſt of beaſts, they know the hand that feeds them.

LYSANDER.

Humanity lives in thy breaſt, O king!
And dictates confidence unlimited;
Virtue approves the generous extreme,
And magnanimity this error loves.
Let private men indulge the glorious fault,
And ſet their lives and fortunes on the faith
And gratitude of thoſe they have oblig'd;
But let ſeverer prudence guard the heart
Of him whoſe brows are circled with a crown.

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

O King! the captain of Amycla's gate
Informs you that he has this hour deſcried
A band of men who halted near his poſt;
A thouſand Thracians, they report themſelves,
Hir'd by AMPHARES for SELEUCUS' ſervice.

AGIS.

A thouſand Thracians!

OFFICER.

On their march to Sardis.

LYSANDER.

By whoſe permiſſion do they march this way?

OFFICER.

Before the troops arriv'd, a herald came
Who to the Ephori a meſſage bore.

AGIS.

Your diligence in duty I commend.

Exit OFFICER.

LYSANDER.

The veil's withdrawn, and treaſon ſtands reveal'd.

Ne'er

Ne'er ſhall AMPHARES need again forgiveneſs.
With what a double tongue the traitor ſpoke!
All-ſeeing Gods! how little do we know
The greatneſs of thoſe bleſſings you confer.
Had we not fought to day, had we not conquer'd,
AGIS and Sparta had been loſt for ever.

AGIS.

This victory came like the bolt of Jove,
And levell'd their deſigns.

LYSANDER.

Yet if they dare
The worſt of crimes, their treaſon may ſucceed.
Your troops, your conquering troops, are not arriv'd;
Th' aſſembly meets; unguarded there you ſtand;
What keeps the traitors from your noble life?

AGIS.

My life! LYSANDER. No, I fear not that.
The antient annals of this land record,
That barbarous foes revere the race divine,
And turn in battle from a Spartan king.

LYSANDER.

The multitude may ſtill revere their lord
Who from the blood of great Alcides ſprings;
And yet ſome impious hand may ſtrike the prince,
Altho' of virtue as of race divine.

AGIS.

I'll change the guards, and place at ev'ry gate
Some men of truſt.

LYSANDER.

Mount your Theſſalian ſteed,
And meet the troops that haſten to your aid.
With eager ſteps the royal band advance,
And wiſh for nothing but their king to lead them.
Then if the furies in their wrath provoke
Your foes to riſe in arms, let arms decide.

Ne'er

Ne'er were the good and bad winnow'd ſo well,
And ſever'd from each other. Such the hoſts,
And ſuch will be their fate, as when the rage
Of earth-born giants dar'd the ſons of heaven.

AGIS.

Thou reaſon'ſt like an anxious friend, LYSANDER.
Thy fears are all for me, mine for my people.

Enter RHESUS.

Hail, gallant RHESUS! know'ſt thou ought of thoſe
Thy countrymen, who thus unlook'd-for come,
And in a doubtful hour perplex our councils.

RHESUS.

The Thracians are a thouſand men compleat.
From ſnowy Hemus and the northern hills
Of wild Odryſus the fierce warriors come,
RHINALCES leads them, of illuſtrious birth;
But, ſtern, imperious, and grown old in arms,
He knows no umpire but the ſword, no law
Except obedience to the prince he ſerves.

AGIS.

Such oft are thoſe that quit a needy home
To ſerve as hirelings in a tyrant's hoſt.

RHESUS.

Next in command, my brother EUXUS ſtands,
A Youth to MARS devoted; for he loves
Danger itſelf, not danger's rich reward.

LYSANDER.

Haſt thou yet ſeen him?

RHESUS.

No.

LYSANDER.

Has he yet heard
That thou art here in Sparta?

RHESUS.

He believes

That

That I am ſtill in Athens. From the herald
I kept my name and quality conceal'd;
For I ſuſpected that theſe Thracian troops,
Though hir'd for Aſia, were for Sparta meant.
If it prove ſo, I may be uſeful here:
My valiant brother bears a generous mind,
And, tho' of arms enamour'd, juſtice loves.

AGIS.

Haſte to your valiant brother, and explain,
With an impartial tongue, the ſtate of Sparta.
Shew him where juſtice, and where honour ſtand.
If theſe are ſacred, as thou ſay'ſt they are,
To gallant EUXUS, he may prove a friend.

LYSANDER.

Exert the ſtrong perſuaſion of a brother;
And tell him, RHESUS, if he loves bright arms,
And that immortal glory valour gains,
No more to wield a mercenary ſword,
But plant himſelf with thee in Sparta's ſoil,
Where AGIS will his noble nature cheriſh,
And rear his courage to ſuch lofty deeds,
As antient ſtory tells of Sparta's chiefs. [*Exit* RHESUS.

AGIS.

I hope that RHESUS will divide the Thracians:
This favours well the biaſs of my mind,
Averſe to leave the city on ſuſpicion,
And drive the wavering faction to extremes.

LYSANDER.

O generous prince! whom I admire and blame.
The greateſt foe, the foe LYSANDER dreads
Is the unequall'd gentleneſs of AGIS.
Review the ſtory of the Grecian ſtates,
And mark how freedom fell in every land.

The

The brave asserters of the public cause
Have ever been too mild in evil times;
Have, like indulgent parents, spar'd the rod,
And let the vices of their children live
To kill the virtues. Hence, let AGIS learn
The only lesson that his nature needs.

AGIS.

Uncertain is the peril if I stay,
But certain is the evil if I fly.
I will remain; but to assure my safety,
You must, LYSANDER, to the troops return.

LYSANDER.

And leave my prince alone amidst his foes!——
Revoke the hard command if you're resolv'd
To brave the peril, then my place I claim
Next to your person; by your side I stand;
Perhaps some noble service I may render,
Receive the mortal wound aim'd at my prince,
And with my life redeem the life of AGIS.

AGIS.

Your great imagination's up in arms;
But hear me, and let calmer reason judge.
I am determin'd not to quit the city,
The guilt of civil war shall not be mine.
LYSANDER's presence here without the troops
Would but embolden and excite my foes,
Who may be tempted by this fair occasion,
This mighty vantage, to surprize us both.
Without delay, once more, LYSANDER, arm,
And ostentatiously pass through the gate.
This victory, and the approaching host
Will hush the threatned storm.

LYSANDER.

So may it prove.

But

But there is ſomething in my heart rebels
Againſt this counſel! Oh! I cannot leave you——
Nor ought I now to ſtay. Let never man
Say in the morning that the day's his own:
Things paſt belong to memory alone;
Things future are the property of hope.
The narrow line, the Iſthmus of theſe ſeas,
The inſtant ſcarce diviſible, is all
That mortals have to ſtand on. O my prince!
LYSANDER leaves you with a heavy heart.

AGIS.

Farewel, thou Spartan of the antient mould,
Dear as the brother of his blood to AGIS!

[*They embrace and part.*

LYSANDER!

LYSANDER.

Ha! may heaven your purpoſe change!

AGIS.

My will is fix'd. But though my judgment too
Confirms the ſecret counſel of my heart,
Yet I may be deceiv'd; perhaps, my friend,
We part this moment ne'er to meet again.

LYSANDER.

Let us not part at all. 'Tis inſpiration,
The guardian God, the Demon of the mind,
Thus often preſſes on the human breaſt.

AGIS.

Miſtake me not, I feel no new impreſſion,
Nor if I did, ſhould I by that be alter'd;
For ſuch preſages, be they ſad or joyful,
I deem them but the meteors of the mind,
Bred by the inward elemental ſtrife,
When great events perplex and ſhake the ſoul.
My thoughts regard the ſtate. If I ſhould fall,
To thee, LYSANDER, I commit my ſon,
The only pledge of my DEIDAMIA's love.

Train

Train up the boy to walk in the ſame path
Which we have trod together, the ſtreight path
Of virtue and true glory. If he proves
Of noble nature, and I hope no leſs,
He will not ſhun the lofty path of honour,
Tho' fate ſhould mark it with his father's blood.

LYSANDER.

Hear this, immortal Gods! who rule the world,
And guard a prince the image of yourſelves!
O never, never may his royal race
LYSANDER's aid require. [*Exit* LYSANDER.

AGIS *alone.*

Affection choaks his words,
His generous heart burſts at this ſolemn parting.
In times like theſe of a declining ſtate,
Baſeneſs infects the general race of men;
But yet theſe trying times rear up a few
More excellent, refin'd and conſcious ſpirits,
More principled, and fit for all events,
Than any in the good, but equal, maſs
Of a far better age. Such is LYSANDER.
The hour draws near.

Enter SENATORS.

SENATORS.

Aſſembled Sparta waits.

AGIS.

I come, my friends! I will addreſs the people,
Proclaim aloud mine actions which upbraid,
And ſoon ſhall ſilence, my deſpiteful foes.
My heart ſhall ſpeak. This ſceptre of my fathers,
By long deſcent hereditary mine,
I would diſdain to hold, did I not hope,
That by its ſway I might recall thoſe days
When Lacedæmon was the pride of Greece,

The gaze and terror of the wondring world:
For there, as in a choſen temple, dwelt
Valour and virtue, whilſt attending fame
And glory on the land of heroes ſhone.

First SENATOR.

O Gods above! How happy were our ſires,
In thoſe bright days of antient glory born.

AGIS.

Thoſe days ſhall yet return, Olympian Jove!
Or low in duſt ſhall Spartan AGIS lie.

[*Sound of muſical inſtruments.*

First SENATOR.

What means this muſick?

AGIS.

To the Gods of Greece
And Sparta's guardian deities it ſounds.
Let us begone, nor ſtop the holy train. [*Exeunt.*

Enter a Proceſſion.

AGESISTRATA, EUANTHE, *Prieſts of* JUPITER *and* HERCULES.

CHORUS of Matrons and Virgins.

Woes aproach till now unknown;
Diſcord ſhakes the Spartan throne.
Heav'n avert the ills we fear!
Jove, from high Olympus, hear!

Prieſts of JUPITER.

This day our foes embattled came,
And vow'd to end the Spartan name:
Embattled near our gates they fought;
But Jove for us deliverance wrought.
He ſmote Achaia's hoſt with fear,
He thunder'd in their trembling rear;
Jove's lightning flam'd from Sparta's ſpear.

CHORUS

CHORUS of Matrons and Virgins.

Ever may his mighty arm
Save the Spartan ſtate from harm!
Ne'er may proud invader boaſt
Glory from our glory loſt.
Light, O Jove, that ſacred fire
Which did Sparta's ſons inſpire,
When the prince and people ſtrove,
Burning with their country's love.
Xerxes, lord of great alarms,
Xerxes rous'd the world to arms.

Prieſts of JUPITER.

The earth was troubled at his hoſt,
The ſprings were dried, the rivers loſt;
But Spartan valour check'd his pride,
A ſlender band his hoſt defy'd:
Thermopylæ (immortal name!)
Beheld the Perſian tyrant's ſhame.

CHORUS of all.

There the brave three hundred dy'd,
Faithful, by their prince's ſide:
There they conquer'd, tho' they dy'd.

Prieſts of HERCULES.

On earth below, in Heav'n above,
Rever'd, victorious, ſon of Jove!
Hear, Alcides, hear our prayer,
Thy godlike offspring claims thy care.

CHORUS of all.

Bend thy bow, Tyrinthius, bend,
Lightly on the earth deſcend.
Fix an arrow on the ſtring,
Stand beſide the Spartan king,
AGIS of thy race divine,
Tried in labours like to thine.
Undaunted, like thee, with monſters he ſtrives;
The fierceſt of Hydras in faction revives.

If he falls a ſacrifice,
Never more ſhall Sparta riſe!

[*Exeunt.*] *As the proceſſion goes off.*

Enter AMPHARES.

Thus may my pious foes for ever ſtrive.
Be theirs the airy aid of fabled Jove.
In nearer and more certain force I truſt:
Of human race, I fight with mortal arms.
Yet prais'd be Fortune, goddeſs of my vows,
'Tis ſhe whoſe happy hand leads forth theſe dames;
Ne'er to the palace ſhall their ſteps return.
The net I've ſpread now covers all my foes,
Except LYSANDER. O had he been here!
Then I had ſtood, like mighty Atlas, firm;
Fate but reſerves him to another day.
The time is almoſt come; my Thracians now
Have reach'd their poſt; and many a daring eye
Looks for the ſignal. Here it is—my ſword.
When I appear thus arm'd, the furies riſe;
This is the comet, the fierce blazing ſtar,
On which commotion, change, and death attend.

[*Exit* AMPHARES.

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

Enter EUANTHE.

ATHENIAN Pallas! O my native Gods!
Protect your ſuppliant in a foreign land,
Where ſhall I fly? O AGIS! O LYSANDER!

Enter SANDANE.

O Queen! a ſtranger thy protection claims,
Altho' thy lord, thy friends, are foes to mine,
Yet thou wilt ſympathize with thy own ſex,
And ſave me from the violence I fear.

SANDANE.

Where is thy lover to defend thee now?
Where is the conquering valour of LYSANDER?
And virtuous AGIS? the reforming king
Whom thou waſt wont to praiſe. Let me adviſe thee,
On brave AMPHARES try thy boaſted charms;
So young, ſo fair a captive may ſubdue
The victor's heart.

EUANTHE.

Are theſe a woman's words?

SANDANE.

They are, and ſuited to a light adventurer,
Who left her parents, and her native land,
To ſeek a lover. Sure her roving mind,
True to its paſſion, may the object change,
And, pleas'd, accept AMPHARES for LYSANDER.

EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

Thou ſpeak'ſt thy thoughts, and judgeſt of EUANTHE
By the deceitful ſtandard of thy heart.
Too ſoon thou haſt betray'd thy ſecret ſoul.
I am not yet a captive; I may live
To ſhew thee, Queen, that pity thou deny'ſt me.
LYSANDER comes to reſcue, or revenge.

SANDANE.

LYSANDER ſoon ſhall be as AGIS is.
Thy wretched arrogance my ſoul contemns.
An enemy I have, the Spartan Queen,
Whoſe bitter tongue has often wrong'd my fame;
Her will I ſeek, and triumph o'er the ruin
Of her, and of her peace.

EUANTHE.

Had'ſt thou e'er felt
Sincere affection, thou would'ſt not inſult me;
And had'ſt thou ever known a mother's pains,
Thou could'ſt not bear to grieve a mother's heart.

SANDANE.

Minion, for this expect! thou pageant! thou!
Thou dar'ſt to brave, exaſperate a Queen.
That ſhalt repent thy pride, and kneel in vain.

[*Exit* SANDANE.

EUANTHE.

The anger that ſupported me is gone,
I feel my weakneſs, and her threatnings fear.——

Enter LYSANDER *in a* HELOT's *garb.*

HELOT, if pity, or if gold——

LYSANDER.

EUANTHE!

EUANTHE.

O Heav'n and earth! LYSANDER!

LYSANDER.

LYSANDER.

Yes, my love!
Thou ſee'ſt LYSANDER, miſerable man!
Does AGIS live?

EUANTHE.

Amidſt the claſh of arms,
And cries of fighting men, I heard them ſhout
The name of AGIS. By-and-by a Spartan,
Flying and wounded, as he paſs'd call'd out,
"The king is ſafe; the king has gain'd the temple."

LYSANDER.

Then all is ſafe; for Sparta lives in him.

EUANTHE.

But the good Queen!

LYSANDER.

Her ſex, her age protects her.

EUANTHE.

Heaven grant they may; an impious band in arms
Purſu'd the holy train. Fear gave me ſpeed,
For I outſtript them all. But now, LYSANDER,
Betray'd, encompaſs'd, now what ſhall we do?

LYSANDER.

Wert thou but ſafely plac'd, LYSANDER knows
What he ſhould do. I muſt not tarry here.
There is a temple in this ſpacious city,
For ſanctity above all others fam'd,
To Juno ſacred, the avenging Queen!
Thither a truſty ſlave of AGIS' houſe
Will guide thy ſteps; by my command he waits
Without the palace.

EUANTHE.

Whither doſt thou go?

LYSANDER.

In this inglorious garb diſguis'd, I wait
Till night and darkneſs come; then I attempt

The wall, where'er I find it ſlightly guarded.
What mortal arm ſhall then oppoſe my way,
Urg'd as I am? Alas, my lov'd EUANTHE!
From my compliance with thy fond requeſt
Springs the worſt evil of this dreadful hour.
I have betray'd the confidence of AGIS:
But I'll repair my fault.

EUANTHE.

What doſt thou mean?

LYSANDER.

AGIS commanded me to leave the city,
And thinks, would to the Gods he thought aright!
That his LYSANDER heads the Spartan troops,
In whom his only hope of ſafety lies.
But I, EUANTHE! partial to thy will,
Sought thee in vain. In that unhappy time
They ſeiz'd the gates, and ſhut me up in Sparta.
Fate puniſhes with too ſevere a doom
The human weakneſs of indulgent love.
AGIS! I come! — For the deep voices now
Of duty, friendſhip, gratitude, and glory,
Sound thro' my breaſt, and from my beating heart
Their echo rings. Farewel! my love, farewel!

EUANTHE.

Not yet, LYSANDER! AGIS is oppreſt,
And Sparta too. Does duty, or does honour,
Require LYSANDER, like an eaſtern ſlave,
To fall attendant on the royal pile?
What can you do? The army will betray you:
So with the few, the faithful few that love you,
You'll do ſome deſperate action, and be ſlain.
If you deſpiſe your life, yet think of me,
The prey of curſt AMPHARES.

LYSANDER.

Infernal Gods!
Let me not think of that. Retire, EUANTHE,

And

And in the hallow'd temple reſt ſecure.
This night I'll force ill-guarded Sparta's gates,
And ſave my prince, my country, and EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

Thy prince, thy country are already loſt.
O liſten, and preſerve thyſelf and me:
The ſhip that bore me to the Spartan ſhore
Rides ſtill at anchor: leave this wretched land.
Where'er thou goeſt I will attend thy ſteps;
Thy gods ſhall be my gods; thy people, mine.

LYSANDER.

Alas! EUANTHE does not ſee the ſhame,
The ruin of that counſel love inſpires.
Th' eternal gods repoſe this hour in me
No common truſt: Upon my deeds depend
The fate of AGIS, and the fate of Sparta.
My ſoldiers too, my brave, my faithful ſoldiers,
The meaneſt warrior of the royal band
Freely devotes his life to godlike AGIS.
And ſhall their leader, ſhall the friend of AGIS,
Forſake his prince? I will forget thy words;
Repeat them not.

EUANTHE.

Is this LYSANDER's love?
Muſt I not ſpeak? Is my reward reproach?
For you I left my friends and native land,
Defy'd all danger, and all cenſure ſcorn'd;
Now in my ſore diſtreſs I call on thee
For whom I ſuffer, to protect my honour,
And in my ſore diſtreſs doſt thou upbraid me?
If ever maid, like credulous EUANTHE,
Burſts all the bonds of nature for one man,
Let her beware that he be not a Spartan!
O wretched maid! O Athens loſt in vain!

[*Ready to faint.*

LYSANDER.

All-ruling powers! why am I thus diſtreſt?
Why come calamities ſo thick upon me?
EUANTHE, hear me; you ſhall be obey'd.
I'll bear thee hence, and go with thee to Athens,
Reſtore thee to thy country and thy friends,
Of whom thou doſt complain I have bereft thee.
LYSANDER will acquit himſelf to thee,
And to mankind——

EUANTHE.

Delude me not. Alas!
Thy tongue ſpeaks comfort; but thy voice, thy looks,
Wild and unſettled, drive me to deſpair;
For thou, methinks, art deſperate, LYSANDER.
Thoſe lips that quiver, and thoſe eyes that roll
Like dragon's eyes, thoſe are not ſigns of love!
Thou ſay'ſt that thou wilt bear me back to Athens;
Will that acquit thee, if thou leav'ſt me there?
Is that thy purpoſe?

LYSANDER.

Yes. I'll leave the world,
And death ſhall wipe diſhonour from my name;
AGIS and Sparta ſhall forgive me then,
And every debt be paid.

EUANTHE.

LYSANDER, no.
Love's victims are not of your ſterner ſex.
It is the deſtiny of womankind
Conſtant to live, and deſolate to die.
To ſtrong neceſſity EUANTHE yields.
If I ſhould tear you from the ſide of AGIS,
I ſee my fate; you ne'er would love me more:
Tho' you ſhould live, yet you would die to me.
But I will rather ſtay and periſh here
Than live without thee. Go, and fight for AGIS;
But in the hour of danger think of me!

Calm

Calm in the rear direct the courſe of battle,
The dreadful van let other warriors lead,
In whom nor AGIS nor EUANTHE lives.

LYSANDER.

Theſe words become my idoliz'd EUANTHE!
And honour now approves the voice of love.
O thou firſt object of my young deſires,
And thro' each period of my ripening years
Still more maturely and intenſely lov'd,
Hear and believe my words.—Beware—Beware.

Enter AMPHARES. [*To his people.*]

'Tis ſhe, by Venus! halt. Fear not my fair,
Nor meditate eſcape from your AMPHARES.

EUANTHE.

My AMPHARES!

AMPHARES.

Thine, and thine alone!
Thou low'ring ſlave, begone! Haſte! urge me not
To ſtain my ſword with thy ignoble blood.

[*Exit* LYSANDER.

EUANTHE.

Is this thy love? Imperious, and in arms,
Recent from blood and treaſon, doſt thou come,
To take by force and violence my heart?

AMPHARES.

The love of thee, more powerful than ambition,
Inflam'd me to attempt the Spartan throne.
Thy beauty is the torch that lights the war:
For thee I conquer—Smile not thus in ſcorn,
Deign to accept my hand and Sparta's crown.

EUANTHE.

Doſt thou beſtow the diadem of Sparta?
Where is thy lawful prince?

AMPHARES.

LEONIDAS?

EUAN-

EUANTHE.

AGIS.

AMPHARES.

That AGIS is no more a king;
A ſuppliant, ſurrounded by my troops,
In Juno's temple, with the prieſts he dwells.
LEONIDAS, by me reſtor'd to power,
Will gladly ſhare with me divided empire.
Or, if I pleaſe to reign alone, I may.
Thro' dark conſpiracy and open ſtrife,
For thee I ſtrove; thou wilt reward my love.
Beauty, like thine, pertains not to the vanquiſh'd,
But ſtill triumphant reigns the victor's queen.

EUANTHE.

Think'ſt thou there is no truth in human breaſts,
No faithful loyalty, no conſtant love?
Soon ſhalt thou learn thine error. I begin
To teach thee firſt. Thee and thy love I ſcorn!
And may the gods reward thy baſe ambition
As I reward thy love.

AMPHARES.

O womankind!
How well your paſſions teach us to be juſt!
You love LYSANDER ſtill; a little time
Will from your mind eraſe the memory
Of that vain-glorious, loſt, and ruin'd man,
Who was my rival.

EUANTHE.

Was! whate'er he was
He is, and more. Thou and thy crimes contribute
To make him more illuſtrious, more belov'd,
Thou giv'ſt him ſcope and vantage to his virtue.
Speak'ſt thou of crowns whilſt royal AGIS reigns?
Of power in Sparta whilſt LYSANDER lives?
The ſhort dominion of this day is thine,
But vengeance and LYSANDER come to morrow.

AM-

AMPHARES.

Thou do'ſt inſtruct me. If my time is ſhort
We ſhould not part. I'll ſee thee ſafely placed
Where I command.

EUANTHE.

I will not go with thee.

AMPHARES.

Yield to neceſſity; for on my call
Compulſion waits. No other hand than mine
Should touch EUANTHE.

[*Seizes her hand.*]

EUANTHE.

Help, Spartans! help!
If any hear me who regard LYSANDER.

Enter LYSANDER *with a dagger, and runs at* AMPHARES, *who retires.*

AMPHARES.

Aſſiſt me, friends. Surround him——'Tis LYSANDER.
Take him alive.

[*To his people who enter.*]

LYSANDER.

No. That they cannot, traitor!
[*Snatches a ſword from one of the ſoldiers.*
Now I am better arm'd.

AMPHARES.

Kill him, EUXUS,
Unleſs he yield his ſword.

LYSANDER.

Come, brave AMPHARES!
Come to the front, and there direct my fate.

AMPHARES.

Kill him!

EUXUS.

That would diſhonour me for ever.
Advance on all ſides, and cloſe in upon him.

LY-

LYSANDER.

Strangers, give way, and let the Spartan chiefs
Fight their own quarrels. I will give you all
The wealth of Sparta.

AMPHARES.

Ha! he grows upon them!
Throw down your weapons, or I'll pierce her heart!
[*Points his ſword to* EUANTHE'*s breaſt.*

EUXUS.

Renown'd LYSANDER! give thy ſword to EUXUS.

EUANTHE.

Defend thy noble life! Regard not mine.
[AMPHARES *lifts his arm.*

LYSANDER.

Hold, hold.

AMPHARES.

Thou know'ſt me.—Chooſe.

LYSANDER.

I cannot bear to ſee EUANTHE die!
[*Throws down his ſword.*
O AGIS! O my prince!

AMPHARES.

Victorious chief,
Stateſman and ſoldier, learned Athens' boaſt.
Where are thy glories now?

LYSANDER.

The ſtrife of tongues
I ſhun, as thou didſt ſhun the ſtrife of arms.

AMPHARES.

Yet let thy haughtineſs grant one requeſt.
Tell me what brought the great LYSANDER hither?
Some ſtratagem profound; which none but he

Could

Could have contriv'd to haſten his deſtruction,
And add diſgrace and ridicule to ruin.

LYSANDER.

Had'ſt thou not fled, thou coward, from my ſword,
And ſhriek'd for help, this arm, this ſingle arm,
Had baffled all the craft of falſe AMPHARES.

AMPHARES.

This pride becomes thee, and thy loſt condition.

LYSANDER.

In this condition it becomes me beſt
To brave AMPHARES. Had he been a captive
I ſhould have pitied him.

AMPHARES.

Plead'ſt thou for pity?

LYSANDER.

For none that thou can'ſt give. Hear me, then judge,
If what I ſpeak is meant to win thy favour.
I ſhould have pitied thee by fate ſubdued:
Oppreſt with crimes, thy ſpirit would have ſhrunk
Under calamity, and guilt have marr'd
The noble vigor and the port of manhood.
Amidſt thy triumph, does it not confound thee,
To think thou ow'ſt it to exceſs of baſeneſs?
Thou haſt prevail'd, becauſe the generous AGIS
Would not believe there could be ſuch a traitor.

AMPHARES.

Oft have I heard, and often ſeen thy folly,
But now to rail is madneſs. With one word
I could impoſe on thee eternal ſilence.

LYSANDER.

And would—I know thee—if thou thought'ſt it wiſe.
Even then, as now, I ſhould contemn thy power:

But

But know, I fear thee not. The king is ſafe,
And his victorious troops at break of day
Will thunder in thine ears: thou and thy band
Will ill ſuſtain the ſhock of ſuch an hoſt.
My life is in thy hands, but yet beware,
Thy fate depends on mine. In Lacedæmon
A prince like AGIS ſoon will find LYSANDERS.

AMPHARES.

Uncertain thy predictions of the future:
Small is thy preſcience, witneſs thy condition.
EUXUS, conduct him to yon corner tower.

EUANTHE.

LYSANDER!

LYSANDER.

Oh! I have withdrawn mine eyes
From thee, and to contention turn'd my heart.

EUANTHE.

Yet look on me before we part for ever.

LYSANDER.

At looks or words of tenderneſs, he'll ſmile,
And o'er the ſorrows of our love rejoice:
Forgive me ſtill, I muſt not, cannot ſpeak.

EUANTHE.

But I will ſpeak, and earth and heaven ſhall hear me.
AMPHARES too ſhall hear; for it will gaul him,
To hear EUANTHE now avow her love
And faith to her LYSANDER. Powerful words,
Emblems and figures of firm conſtancy,
Such as fond lovers laviſhly employ
To ſooth the pangs of parting and of abſence.
Such muſic vows accord not with our ſtate,
Our dreadful ſtate: yet do not grieve thy heart,
Thy noble heart, too full of other ſorrows,
With thoughts of what may happen to EUANTHE.

Nothing

Nothing ſhall happen to debaſe EUANTHE.
The bondage and the ſhame that women ſuffer,
Who live the ſlave of thoſe who ſlew their lords,
I ne'er ſhall know, I never will endure.
If cruel deſtiny decrees thy fall,
Unſpotted to the ſhades I'll follow thee,
For whom alone on earth I'd wiſh to live.

LYSANDER.

Lead on. Farewel, EUANTHE.

EUANTHE.

Gods above!

AMPHARES.

Conduct her to the tower where late you lodg'd
The captive queen.

EUANTHE.

Alas! no guarded tower,
Or vaulted dungeon, ever yet contain'd
Two more unhappy, or more helpleſs captives!

[*Exeunt guarded.*

AMPHARES.

LYSANDER'S fierce demeanour and his threats,
Proud as he is, ſpring not from pride alone;
I muſt ſtretch forth my arms to ſhelter'd AGIS.
If I accompliſh not this night his ruin,
To-morrow's riſing ſun may ſee my fall.
Curſt be the temples! curſt the prieſts of Sparta!
Now I am like a man who has adventur'd
To croſs the flats forſaken by the main,
And looking back ſees not the ſhore he left;
Thro' deeps and ſhallows, rocks, and quaking ſands
On he muſt go. To ſtop is ſure perdition.

Enter SANDANE.

Hail to the queen of Sparta!

SANDANE.

Yes, AMPHARES:
Now fortune ſeems to ſmile upon SANDANE.
I ſaw the ſullen captive led along,
His gloomy eye-balls fix'd upon the earth.

AMPHARES.

This night, O queen! muſt ſee the bold concluſion
Of a deſign, thus far ſo bravely borne.
On hollow and deceitful ground we tread,
Whilſt AGIS lives.

SANDANE.

Thou ſpeak'ſt my very thoughts.
Seaſons there are, AMPHARES, which ſuſpend
All ſanctimonious reverence and reſpect.

AMPHARES.

Temples, and prieſts, and altars ſhall not ſave him,
If fate ſhould drive us to the laſt extreme.
Meanwhile, I will employ more gentle means
To gain our ends: For ſacrilege would rouſe
The zealous multitude to rage and arms.
The temple is begirt with Thracian bands,
Who all acceſs forbid; and AGIS knows not
What has befallen LYSANDER. I will ſend
A ſubtle Spartan in LYSANDER's name,
Who may by ſpecious arguments perſuade him
To quit the ſanctuary; and then, O queen!
With all ſolemnity of pomp and form,
Th' aſſembled Ephori ſhall paſs his doom,
And in the ſame decree include LYSANDER.

SANDANE.

Think'ſt thou the Ephori will give the ſanction
Of their authority to AGIS' death?

AMPHARES.

They will. At midnight the ſtern judges meet.

In Terror's temple; they have charg'd a herald
With orders to the troops not to advance
On pain of treaſon. The aſtoniſh'd people
Will crouch and tremble at that awful power,
Which draws the ſword of juſtice on a king.
Then ſhall your lord's authority revive;
And like the ſun, when burſting from a cloud,
With greater power and brighter ſplendor ſhine.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

LYSANDER *as a Priſoner, the* Thracian *Guards at a diſtance.*

LYSANDER *muſing, advances and ſpeaks.*

HAS virtue no prerogative on earth?
And can the Gods permit the fall of AGIS?
They can. 'Tis man's own arrogance arrays him
In gorgeous titles of excelling nature,
Care of the Gods, and centre of creation.
I fear, I fear man's life is but a dream;
His ſoul a ſubtile eſſence of the blood,
A rainbow beauty, made to ſhine a ſpace,
Then melt and vaniſh into air.
Ye mighty minds of ſages and of heroes!
Epaminondas, Plato, great Lycurgus!
Who once with ſuch tranſcendent glory ſhone,
Brighter than all the ſtars that deck the heavens,
Is your celeſtial fire for ever quench'd,
And nought but aſhes left, the ſport of chance,
Which veering winds ſtill blow about the world?
I will not think ſo! Yet, alas! the while
I ſee and feel preſages that alarm.
If they prove true. If man is like the leaf,
Which falling from the tree revives no more,
I ſhall be ſhortly duſt. That will not hear
EUANTHE weep, nor ſee the ſhame of Sparta!

Now

Now I'm a living man, my mind is free,
And, whilſt I live and breathe, by heaven I'll act
As if I were immortal.

Enter RHESUS *and* EUXUS.

RHESUS.

See where he ſtands! behold him!—O my brother!
The braveſt and the beſt of human kind.
Oppreſt with grief and ſhame, and fatal love,
Indignant virtue but augments his pain.
Will not my EUXUS give his aid to heave
This noble veſſel from the rock it beats on?

[*Goes up to* LYSANDER.

My lord! my leader! Oh!

LYSANDER.

My faithful RHESUS!
Com'ſt thou to ſhare the ruin that LYSANDER
Has brought upon himſelf, his prince, his country?

RHESUS.

I come more eager and more proud to ſhare
Thy preſent fortune, than thy former glory.
Alas, my lord! 'twould make a ſtranger weep,
To ſee the chief, whom conqueſt crown'd to day,
A captive.

LYSANDER.

RHESUS, thou haſt nam'd the leaſt
Of my calamities. I could endure,
With Spartan fortitude, my own diſaſters;
Bear to be hurled from meridian glory,
And, like a falling ſtar, be ſeen no more.
But oh! the king!—and deſolate EUANTHE!—

RHESUS.

Do not deſpair.

LYSANDER.

Thou art my only hope.
This day thy generous brother ſav'd my life;

At his requeſt I yielded up my ſword,
Elſe had LYSANDER like a ſoldier fall'n.
Thou art my friend in noble perils prov'd.
My fate, the fate of Sparta, and of AGIS,
Is in the hands of EUXUS——

RHESUS.

Ah! my brother!

EUXUS.

O chief of Sparta! EUXUS is diſtreſt
On every ſide. Thy virtue, thy misfortunes
Have touch'd my heart: but here in truſt I ſtand.
Would I had never ſeen the walls of Sparta!

LYSANDER.

The Gods, the guardian Gods of Lacedæmon,
Have brought you hither to preſerve a people,
And ſave from traitors' hands the beſt of kings.
Altho' at firſt you raſhly drew the ſword
In blind obedience to a leader's will,
The gallant EUXUS will not ſure perſiſt
In error known, in manifeſt injuſtice.
Thy trade is war, brave ſoldier; this is not
An office for thy ſword.

EUXUS.

True are thy words.
I was indeed deceiv'd, and came not here
To mix in Sparta's ſtrife; but honour now——

RHESUS.

I will not hear thee plead ſo bad a cauſe.
Is there a bond in nature like the tie
Which binds the hearts of brothers? And will EUXUS,
From vain ideas of fidelity
To that deteſted traitor, falſe AMPHARES,
His brother murder?

EUXUS.

EUXUS.

No.

RHESUS.

Then let thy arms
Defend LYSANDER. By our country's Gods
I ſwear, and by our warlike father's ſoul,
Whoſe well-beloved ſon thou ever wert,
That with the Spartan chief thy brother dies.

LYSANDER.

Might you not favour the eſcape of AGIS?
The guards are Thracians.

EUXUS.

I might favour thine.
My power extends not to the guards of AGIS.

RHESUS.

And wilt thou not?

EUXUS.

Command thyſelf, my brother.

RHESUS.

How canſt thou heſitate?

EUXUS.

I muſt beware,
Inferior in command to bold RHINALCES,
And ever view'd by him with jealous eyes.
Whilſt I deliberate no time is loſt.
The light of day ſuits not with your deſigns;
Before the night comes on, I will determine.

LYSANDER.

'Tis almoſt night, the ſun hath left the heavens,
And doubtful twilight uſhers in the gloom.
Perhaps the enemies of AGIS wait
The darkneſs of the night to cover deeds
They dare not act by day. This night I dread—

RHESUS.

RHESUS.

The Ephori have ſent a herald forth,
Charg'd with ſome ſolemn menace, and command
To ſtop the army's march.

LYSANDER.

If they obey,
The fane of Juno guards the king no more!
Eternal Gods! how wretched is LYSANDER!
From me that herald ſhould have heard his anſwer.
Cannot my RHESUS find one gallant Spartan
To bear my orders to the royal band
To ſtorm the city?

RHESUS.

I myſelf will bear
Theſe orders to the camp.

LYSANDER.

Another taſk,
More difficult and dangerous, is thine.
Aſſume the arms and veſture of thy country,
And thro' the Thracians win thy way to AGIS.
RHESUS, the generous ſpirit of that prince
Is of a nature that excludes all fear,
Conſideration, and reſpect of Self:
On earth he acts as if he were a God,
Immortal, and incapable of harm.
Think how the artful falſehood of AMPHARES
May operate on ſuch a royal mind.

[*Enter a* Thracian.

THRACIAN.

The Spartan lord draws near.

EUXUS.

AMPHARES comes.
Retire, my lord, whilſt I advance to meet him:
Our intercourſe might lead him to ſuſpicion.

LYSANDER.

LYSANDER.

Nor vigilance nor care I recommend
To thee, my RHESUS! But let caution rule
Thy forward zeal.

RHESUS.

It ſhall, my noble lord:
My heart beats high with hope to ſee thee riſe
Once more, like Mars, in arms.

LYSANDER.

Eternal Gods!
In Thracian breaſts the Spartan virtue lives.

[LYSANDER *enters into the tower.*

[*Exit* RHESUS.

Manet EUXUS.

Enter AMPHARES.

How does the haughty captive brook confinement?

EUXUS.

Full of inquietude he ſeems, and ſadneſs.
Now in ſome penſive poſture ſits a-while,
Then ſmites his breaſt, and, ſtarting from his ſeat,
Walks to and fro with a diſorder'd pace.

AMPHARES.

Admit no Spartan of whatever ſex,
Or whatſoe'er affinity they claim.

EUXUS.

That ſtrict command hath been already given.

AMPHARES.

'Tis needful, EUXUS; for his furious mind,
In this extreme, will ſnatch at ſlight occaſions
To make incredible and wild attempts.
Renew the charge; then go and ſearch LYSANDER
For ſecret weapons. On his breaſt he wears
A curious gorget, rich with precious ſtones,
And a ſmall portrait of ſurpaſſing beauty,

The image of the fair Athenian maid,
Drawn by an artiſt who has vied with nature
In ſweet expreſſion of her matchleſs charms:
That I muſt have.

EUXUS.

You ſhall without delay.

[*Exit* EUXUS.

Manet AMPHARES.

Let other men deprive themſelves of pleaſure,
And toil for bare ambition; I'll provide
A more luxurious banquet to my taſte.
What tho' as yet EUANTHE loves me not,
It is the nature of her ſex to change.
With wondrous eaſe the female kind ſubmit
To deſtiny; and ſoon are reconcil'd
To perſons and conditions once abhorr'd:
Like birds new caught, who flutter for a time,
And ſtruggle with captivity in vain;
But by-and-by they reſt; they ſmooth their plumes,
And to new maſters ſing their former notes.
This facile temper of the beauteous ſex
Great Agamemnon, brave Pelides, prov'd:
They ſack'd the cities, and they ſlew the ſires,
The brothers, and the lovers of the fair,
Who weep'd a while, then wip'd their watry eyes,
And loſt their ſorrows in the hero's arms.

Enter SANDANE.

The herald is return'd. The royal band,
Inflam'd with rage and ſcorn, the mandate tore;
And to the city bend their rapid march.

AMPHARES.

Let them advance. They haſten to their fate.
A ſecret ſtratagem I have devis'd
To check theſe warriors in their bold career.

SAN-

SANDANE.

The Ephori in reſolution faint——

AMPHARES.

Their courage I'll reſtore; for AGIS yields
To the fallacious counſellor I ſent.
DEMOCHARES, in ſacerdotal robes,
As if diſguis'd t'elude the Thracian guards,
Paſt in by my permiſſion, and conjur'd
AGIS to quit the fane's uncertain ſhelter,
And ſeek the ſure protection of the camp:
Himſelf he offer'd as his faithful guide.
This in LYSANDER's name. AGIS at firſt,
Irreſolute and doubtful, balanc'd much:
At laſt this thought ſprung up, and turn'd the ſcale:
That his eſcape would force us to ſubmiſſion,
And end the ſtrife without the ſhock of arms.
DEMOCHARES at midnight is appointed
To come again; and goes with an addition
That will give certain credence to his words;
The gorget of LYSANDER.

SANDANE.

Now, AMPHARES,
I ſee the ſnares of death are wrapt around him;
Our hated foe ſtands on the verge of fate:
He who deſpis'd SANDANE, and permitted,
With moſt inſulting courteſy, my ſtay;
I would not have remain'd one day in Sparta,
But for the hope I had to work his ruin.
He is the root, with him the branches fall.

AMPHARES.

Altho' his ſon is ſafe in Orchomenos,
Yet there in hopeleſs exile he muſt live.
But AGESISTRATA——

SANDANE.

Shall not ſurvive
To travel ſuppliant thro' the ſtates of Greece,

And

And ſhew her hoary hairs with aſhes ſtrew'd,
To move compaſſion in the giddy Greeks.
She's old, and fit to die.

Enter a Spartan *meſſenger.*

The Thracian Troops
Who guard the temple, faithful to their charge,
Have ſeiz'd a ſpy; who, cloath'd and arm'd like them,
Attempted to paſs thro' their ranks to AGIS.
RHINALCES for a while delay'd the doom
That martial law decrees, till you yourſelf
Diſcourſe and judge the captive.

AMPHARES.

I approve
The vigilance and conduct of RHINALCES.

[*Exit* Meſſenger.

SANDANE.

Still flows the tide of fortune; I'll diſpatch
ORONTES to my lord. Joyful he comes
To re-aſſume his ſceptre and his throne.
Farewel reſtraint, and laws that bind a prince.
The people's majeſty, the ſenate's power,
Shall ſhrink beneath their awful monarch's ſword.
Fear is the only principle of rule,
Which man, like other animals, obeys.

[*Exit* SANDANE.

Manet AMPHARES.

Why tarries EUXUS now?

Enter EUXUS.

I muſt applaud
Thy countrymen for diſcipline and care,
As well as valour; they have ſeiz'd a ſpy,
Who mix'd with them, diſguis'd in Thracian arms.

EUXUS.

In Thracian arms!

AM-

AMPHARES.

Yes, to paſs to AGIS.
Some bold adventurer of the royal band,
Whoſe life—Why art thou troubled? Has LYSANDER
Eſcap'd the guards?

EUXUS.

No. I am pale with anger,
At the reproachful terms, the bitter taunts,
Which I have ſuffer'd from incens'd LYSANDER,
In execution of thy late commands.

[*Gives the gorget.*

AMPHARES.

Is that the cauſe?
He ſoon ſhall be no object of thy wrath.

[*Exit* AMPHARES.

Manet EUXUS.

My brother ſeiz'd! I heſitate no more.
The voice of nature in my breaſt exclaims
Againſt the rigour of thoſe guilty laws,
Which bind a ſoldier blindly to obey.
Son of my mother! Brother of my blood!
I fly to ſave thee.—Now I'm thine, LYSANDER.

[*Goes to the gate of the tower.*

Chief of Sparta!

Enter LYSANDER.

Is EUXUS yet reſolv'd?

EUXUS.

That thou ſhalt ſee, thy enemies are mine.
RHESUS is taken.

LYSANDER.

My contagious fate
Infects my friends! my brave, my generous RHESUS!

EUXUS.

Friend of my brother! firſt I ſet thee free.

An officer of mine commands that gate
At which the Thracians enter'd; haſte thee thither,
Array'd like one of thoſe whom I will ſend
To guide thy ſteps.

LYSANDER.

Ye guardian Gods of Greece!
Whoſe ways myſterious fondly I arraign'd,
Forgive my raſhneſs! Proſper now my ſword——
Where are my arms?

[*Whilſt* LYSANDER *ſpeaks*, EUXUS *beckons one of his ſoldiers.*

EUXUS.

Here enter, and obey
Without reply. [*Exeunt* LYSANDER *and the* Thracian *to the tower.*
The ſoldiers hearts are mine.
Their various toils and perils I have ſhar'd,
Nay more than ſhar'd, the firſt in hard extremes,
When ſignal danger claims a leader's ſword.
No ſpoil, no treaſure, have I e'er reſerv'd;
The wealth I covet is the ſoldier's love.
My bold Odryſians are a faithful band;
In this diſtreſs I'll throw myſelf on them,
They will ſupport me.

Enter a Spartan *meſſenger.*

MESSENGER.

Leader of Thracian bands!
AMPHARES and the magiſtrates of Sparta,
Meet in the ſenate-houſe, expect thy preſence.

EUXUS.

I will attend them. [*Exit meſſenger.*
Surely they have learned,
That I am brother to ill-fated RHESUS.

Enter

Enter LYSANDER *in Thracian dreſs and arms.*

LYSANDER.

Once more at liberty! Once more in arms!
To thee, brave Thracian——

EUXUS.

I am ſummon'd hence
To meet the Ephori. I fear, my lord,
They have diſcover'd RHESUS is my brother.

LYSANDER.

That ſecret in your breaſt and his is lodg'd:
Nor can his alter'd features now betray him.
In early youth he left his native land;
The heat of ſummer, and the winter's cold,
In many a hard campaign, have chas'd his bloom.

EUXUS.

Indeed I knew him not.

LYSANDER.

Then who could know him?
Calm and determin'd to the ſenate go:
Here I'll remain, and wait your quick return.
To know what they deſign imports us much.

EUXUS.

Your ſtay is full of danger; riſk it not.

LYSANDER.

All neceſſary dangers muſt be riſk'd.
Perhaps I am the ſubject of their councils,
Perhaps I may be call'd before the ſenate!
If I appear not, you muſt be diſcover'd,
And my eſcape too ſoon to them be known.

EUXUS.

Your reaſons are of force. I am convinc'd.
Here, take my ſword. Then, if we are betray'd,
My troops obey you. Now, my bold SITHONTES,

[*To one of his Thracians.*

Draw

Draw your battalion nearer to the ſquare,
And guard the perſon of this Spartan chief
As you would guard myſelf. If I'm detain'd,
Follow to death or victory LYSANDER.

[*Exit* EUXUS.

LYSANDER.

Shall I obey the impulſe my of heart,
And lead theſe Thracians to the tower that holds
My loſt EUANTHE? No, let reaſon rule.
AMPHARES will not, dares not, wrong her honour,
Whilſt undecided is the fate of AGIS.
'Tis night, but never ſhall the morning riſe
On—Who can know the ſecret will of heaven!
Tell me, ye inextinguiſhable fires,
That light the counſels of eternal Jove,
Have you, ſince Time began his long career,
Beheld a mortal like LYSANDER toſt?
Down, down, enthuſiaſm! my heart becalm!
A little while, and thou ſhalt beat no more.
Oft have I wiſh'd for perilous occaſions;
And, wandring in the academic grove,
Have rous'd myſelf with ſtrong imagination
Of great exploits by ardent valour done:
But ne'er did fancy's tempeſt match the truth,
The ſtrong reality of ſuch a ſtorm.
O did I combat but for life alone,
Were Sparta and EUANTHE ſafe ſpectators,
How gayly ſhould LYSANDER take the field.—
EUXUS draws near—Upon the inſect wing
Of a ſmall moment ride th' eternal fates.

Enter EUXUS.

My fears were vain. The ſecret is unknown.
But RHESUS is condemn'd to die to-morrow.

LYSANDER.

To-morrow! many men will die to-morrow,

Who

Who are not yet condemn'd.

EUXUS.

'Tis true by heaven!
Mortal deſigns and enterprizes riſe
On every ſide. The Ephori reſolve
At midnight to ſurprize the royal band,
And order'd me to hold my troops prepar'd
Their forces to ſuſtain.

LYSANDER.

'Tis well! 'tis wondrous well!
They urge me now, and point the line of action.
Under the high up-lifted arm of fate
I'll ruſh, and ſtrike before their blow can fall.
I'll ſtorm the city while they force the camp.
Your troops——

EUXUS.

Shall join you at the gate. The word?

LYSANDER.

AGIS. Farewel! Now I ſhall ſave thee, AGIS,
Or leave my blood upon the ſtones of Sparta.

[*Exeunt* LYSANDER *and* EUXUS.

End of the FOURTH ACT.

I ACT

ACT V.

AMPHARES *and the Ephori with the Officers, &c.*
The gate of the priſon ſeen at a diſtance.

First EPHORE.

THE hour is paſt.

——

Second EPHORE.

I fear——

AMPHARES.

Silence. He comes.
I hear the ſteps of wary treading feet.

Enter a Spartan, AGIS *following.*

AGIS.

This way conducts not to Amycla's gate.
Ah! whither doſt thou lead me?

AMPHARES.

To thy death.
The Ephori of Sparta have condemn'd thee.

AGIS.

I am betray'd! What mockery is this
Of ſacred juſtice? Lay aſide the robes
And enſigns of authority prophan'd:
The pomp of magiſtracy ſuits not treaſon.

AMPHARES.

The licence of thy tongue affronts the laws,
Where awful rev'rence our high office bears.

AGIS.

Know ye not this, ye guardians of the laws,
The meaneſt citizen of Lacedæmon
Without free trial cannot be condemn'd;
Much leſs your king. What law have I tranſgreſs'd?
Point out my crime; produce my bold accuſers.

AMPHARES.

Thy crime is tyranny.

AGIS.

Is that my crime?
Had AGIS been a tyrant, thou had'ſt been
His fawning ſlave, thou enemy of freedom.

AMPHARES.

Behold the ſtubborn ſpirit of this man:
He breathes his native arrogance, and ſtill
Inſults his judges, and avows his crimes.

AGIS.

Who made you judges of the life of AGIS?
But you have judg'd: yourſelves, and earth, and heaven,
Know how unjuſtly. To the Gods above,
The ſure avengers of a murder'd king,
I make my laſt appeal. Their meſſenger
Is on the wing; LYSANDER comes apace;
And NEMESIS directs his righteous ſword.

AMPHARES.

Proceeds this boldneſs from thy truſt in him?
Thy great avenger is, like thee, a captive,
And under the ſame mortal ſentence lies.

AGIS.

Ye powers above! LYSANDER too a captive!
Where was he taken?

AMPHARES.

In the ſtreets of Sparta,
Clad in the ſervile garment of a Helot.

AGIS.

Alas! alas! LYSANDER! O my friend!
Thy love for me, thy generous, fearleſs love,
Has wrought thy fall. For me thou cam'ſt to Sparta,
And, like the parent bird hov'ring too near
Its captive young, thy noble life is loſt! ——
Forgive theſe tears, my country! AGIS weeps
For thee. Alas! thy brave defender's gone!
O Lacedæmon, thou art fallen for ever!
Thy bad eſtate ſhall every day grow worſe;
Succeſſive tyrants ſhall exhauſt thy ſtrength,
Till all thy generous youths have bled in vain;
At laſt the conſummation of thy woes
Shall come upon thee; ſome ambitious foe
Shall ſtretch the iron arm of conqueſt forth,
And graſp thee in the circle of his empire.
My native land, the kingdom of my fathers,
Shall be no more a nation! O my country,
How irretrievable is thy condition!
The Macedonian vulture hovers o'er thee,
Soon to deſcend, and on thy vitals prey.

AMPHARES.

Thou may'ſt delay, perhaps avoid, thy death.
Send forth thy mandate to the royal band,
To halt till further orders.

AGIS.

Ha! No more
I truſt thee, traitor. Would I had ever been
Thus deaf to thee! No, let the royal band
Revenge their gallant leader and their king.

Firſt EPHORE.

Thou tempt'ſt thy fate.

AGIS.

I ſcorn it. Since my hope
Of Sparta's loſt, and my beloved friend
Has periſh'd in my cauſe, why ſhould I live?

In

In any period of my former days
I rather would have choſe to die attempting
The glorious deſign, which you have ruin'd,
Than live the prince of a degenerate people,
The tame ſpectator of a falling empire.

First Ephore.

To Reaſon hearken.

Agis.

Reaſon bids me die,
As I have liv'd, unalter'd in my love
To Sparta, and unconquer'd in my purpoſe.
You mean to take advantage of my ſtate,
Without ſpectator, counſellor, or friend:
You think I dread the ſtern approach of death,
Becauſe the blooming ſeaſon of my life
Still promiſes a long extent of years:
But my forefathers blood is in my veins,
The blood of heroes, and of Spartan kings,
Leſs only than the Gods. I dare your worſt,
And with my dying breath acquit my people.
The people roſe; they hearken'd to the voice
Of Liberty, and bleſt the name of Agis.
But you, the nobles, an inglorious race,
Baſe as the daſtard and unarmed Helots,
With foreign arms and mercenary aid,
Bore down the people and oppreſt your prince,
Whom death delivers. Agis ſhall not ſee
The laſt convulſions of expiring Freedom,
For in the firſt he dies.

Amphares.

We'll hear no more
Of theſe invectives. Bear him to the place
Of execution. Officers, advance
And do your duty.

Officers.

This is not our duty.

Amphares

AMPHARES.

What!

OFFICERS.

Murder of a king is not our duty.

AMPHARES.

Mutinous ſlaves! for you I'll find a time.
Sir. [*To* AGIS.]

AGIS.

Touch me not, for uncompell'd I go
To meet my deſtiny. Weep not for me, [*To an officer.*
O! thou whoſe nature ſuits not thy employment,
Weep not for me! I would not change conditions
With theſe bad men. I ſhall not feel the woes
That thou and all muſt feel, the woes of Sparta!
O! might my death avail my much-lov'd country,
I'd die as joyful then, as fearleſs now.

[*Exit* AGIS *guarded.*

AMPHARES.

Atone your inſolence by prompt obedience,
Or death's your portion. [*To an Officer.*

[*Exeunt with* AGIS.

Manet AMPHARES, &c.

AMPHARES.

Magiſtrates of Sparta!
This painful work of neceſſary juſtice
Will quickly end the troubles of the ſtate.
LEONIDAS, who owes his crown to you,
Your faithful zeal and ſervice will reward.

[*Exeunt Ephori.*

[*Manet* AMPHARES *and the* Spartan *who entered with* AGIS.

AMPHARES.

Haſte to the Thracian captain, and require him
To ſend his priſoner LYSANDER hither. [*Exit* Spartan.

AGIS

AGIS remov'd, and turbulent LYSANDER,
Like ſnow along the ſhore, their army melts.

Enter Meſſenger from the dungeon.

MESSENGER.

The executioners refuſe their office:
Sacred they hold the perſon of a king,
A Spartan king deſcended from the Gods.

AMPHARES.

Again thoſe fables of the villain prieſts
Riſe up to thwart me. Now, my truſty ſervant,
Approve thy faith, and win my laſting favour.
Each inſtant of delay is big with peril
Whilſt AGIS lives. Let thy good ſword fulfil
The ſentence of the law, and thy own tongue
Shall name the recompenſe.

MESSENGER.

Shall it, my lord?
I am your inſtrument, and bind myſelf
By this bold deed ſtill faſter to your fortunes. [*Exit.*

AMPHARES.

Ye ſons of bold ambition, learn of me:
Truſt not the ſurvey of another's eye:
Your dangerous voyage needs a pilot's care
Who never quits the helm.

Enter SPARTAN.

SPARTAN.

We are betray'd.
LYSANDER——

AMPHARES.

What of him? Speak——faulter not.

SPARTAN.

Is fled.

AMPHARES.

AMPHARES.

Whither? With whom?—Eternal Gods!

SPARTAN.

The guards have ſet him free, the open gates
I ſaw, and ent'ring ſearch'd the empty tower.

AMPHARES.

That traitor EUXUS!—Now let me reſolve
And quickly too.

SPARTAN.

The people are alarm'd,
And gather to their tribes.

AMPHARES.

Curſt be their tribes.
The deed is done already. Yet I have
One pledge of value.

SPARTAN.

AGESISTRATA. ——

AMPHARES.

This hour ſhe dies. I've ſent a truſty ſlave
To end her woes. But the Athenian maid,
Her I'll bear off in ſpite of frowning fortune.
Go to the turret, and conduct her hither. [*Exit* Spartan.

Manet AMPHARES.

Malignant powers! or blind unerring Fate,
This is your work: now you aſſert your empire.

Enter MESSENGER.

My lord, the troops of EUXUS have revolted.
RHINALCES viſited this night each poſt,
And near Amycla's gate ſome Thracians met,
Whoſe leader, queſtion'd, anſwer'd with his ſword.

AMPHARES.

By heaven and earth, LYSANDER!—Ha! proceed.

MESSENGER.

The ſudden onſet, and the cloud of night
The traitors favour'd; ſome eſcap'd our ſwords,
But many more in the ſharp combat fell.

AMPHARES.

AMPHARES.

Did their fierce leader fall?

MESSENGER.

Above the reſt
Conſpicuous he fought; at him each ſword
Was pointed. If he fell not on the ſpot,
Sure he received wounds that muſt fatal prove.

AMPHARES.

Confirm me that, and I will mock at fate.
Command my troops, that in the Forum watch,
To join RHINALCES. I myſelf will follow.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Enter EUANTHE.

How beautiful ſhe is! Should he ſurvive,
Thoſe charms divine he never ſhall enjoy.

EUANTHE.

Why haſt thou call'd me hither to afflict
And torture me with ſpectacles of woe?

The Gate of the Priſon opens, and AMPHARES' *Slave advances.*

Eternal powers! Why yawn yon dreadful gates?
And from what horrid deed ſtalks yonder villain?

MESSENGER.

Thy orders are obey'd. He lives no more.

EUANTHE.

Barbarian monſter! haſt thou kill'd LYSANDER?—
But I will not reproach thee, nor complain
To the regardleſs Gods. My doom is paſt;
There is one only refuge for EUANTHE.
Once more I follow where LYSANDER leads,
Where murder and AMPHARES cannot come,
To part us more.

She runs towards the dungeon.

AMPHARES *ſeizes her.*

AMPHARES.

Some other ſeaſon chooſe.
There is no leiſure now for lamentation.
Forthwith conduct her to the Arcadian gate:
There with the horſemen wait.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

My Lord, my Lord,
The royal band by Thracian EUXUS led—
(Shout.)

AMPHARES.

My enemy prevails.—This way with me.
My ſteps purſue, or by the Gods of Hell!—

EUANTHE.

I will not leave this place. Draw forth thy ſword,
And try if death can terrify deſpair.

AMPHARES.

Drag her along. *(Shout.)*
Again!—the foe draws near.
(Shout from the other ſide,
AGIS *and Liberty.)*

AMPHARES.

I am encompaſt; yet I'll mar their triumph.
Runs at EUANTHE *with his ſword.*
Enter LYSANDER *followed by* RHESUS.
Infernal dog, turn and behold LYSANDER.
Fly, RHESUS, to the king. Traitor accurſt! *Exit.* RHESUS.
Down, down, to Tartarus; there villain, howl.
[AMPHARES *falls.*

EUANTHE.

Amazing powers! alive! victorious! Oh!

LYSANDER.

And have I come to ſave thee, O EUANTHE!
But oh! I fear, I come too late for AGIS.

The dungeon-mouth is open. *Enter* RHESUS.

Tell me, RHESUS.

RHESUS.

The king is murder'd, in yon vault he lies.

LYSANDER.

My prince! my friend! thy goodneſs, and thy virtue,
Thy clemency, thy mildneſs, have undone thee!
Fatal to Nations is the dread example!
Hence monarchs, who with iron ſceptre rule,
Will juſtify their treatment of mankind;
And virtuous princes, born in evil times,
Will heſitate to ſtem corruption's tide,
Leſt they ſhould be like AGIS overwhelm'd.

AMPHARES.

He who preferr'd LYSANDER to AMPHARES,
Has paid me with his life. My dying hand
Hath ſow'd the ſeeds of diſcord and diſtraction.
Peace ne'er ſhall dwell in Sparta. Plagues on plagues
Shall riſe to curſe you, as— (*Dies.*)

LYSANDER.

Thy ſoul is curſt.
There the fell ſpirit of AMPHARES fled
In imprecations. Prophet of diſaſters,
Upon the diſmal banks of Acheron,
Amidſt the wailing ghoſts, ſtill curſe thy country,
And end a ſpeech the damn'd will hate to hear.
Behold the mother of our murder'd king.

Enter AGESISTRATA *and* EUXUS.

AGESISTRATA.

Alas! I need not aſk the fate of AGIS:
Your looks, your ſilence ſay, I have no ſon!
Yet ſpeak to me, for I can hear the worſt,
I have been long familiar with affliction;
I am the widow of the ſire of AGIS.

LY-

LYSANDER.

There lies the bloody author of his death
Slain by my hand.

AGESISTRATA.

Alas! alas! my ſon!
Oft has my anxious mind this hour foreſeen,
And warn'd thee oft. But thou the danger ſcorn'd,
When Sparta's glory was the price of peril.
O! ſon of Jove, great author of our race,
Suſtain my ſoul. For he who was my ſtay,
My comfort, and my ſtrength, is now no more.
Yet in the path his generous ſpirit choſe,
He fell; and conſcious virtue crown'd his fall.

LYSANDER.

So fell not falſe AMPHARES.

EUXUS.

And SANDANE.

LYSANDER.

SANDANE dead!

EUXUS.

And dreadful was her death.
She fled, for refuge from the people's rage,
To the ſame turret where AMPHARES' troops
Guarded the queen, whoſe mantle on the ground
She ſpied, and wrapt it round her wretched head;
When ſuddenly a ſtern aſſaſſin came,
And ſtabb'd her, as that queen whoſe robe ſhe wore.
Arriving then, I heard her ſhriek for help,
Implore her country's Gods, with bitter cries,
And, in her agony, divulge her crimes.
It was no wonder that ſhe fear'd to die.

AGESISTRATA.

O guilt! thou'rt worſt of all; he knew thee not,
For whom I mourn. Untimely was his fate;
Yet full of high and pleaſing thoughts he fell.

Great-

Great-hearted Virtue, in its ſwelling hour,
Scarce feels the blow that ſtrikes at brittle life.
The painful part is mine, in grief to live.
Would I had dy'd for thee, my ſon! my ſon!

EUANTHE.

EUANTHE's tears ſhall ever flow with yours,
For her protector and her gentle friend.
Myſterious are the counſels of the Gods;
Together AGIS and AMPHARES fall.

LYSANDER.

The ſon of AGIS lives, his infant years
Require a mother's care. Without delay
Proclaim the ſon of AGIS king of Sparta.
To him, the offspring of my prince ador'd,
Deſcend the love and faith I bore to AGIS.
Ye generous Thracians, who this day have ſhewn
The matchleſs worth and honour of your minds,
Henceforth be Spartans. And, ye Spartan youths,
Whom AGIS lov'd, and for whoſe rights he died,
Diſplay the ſpirit of your dear-bought freedom;
With grateful valour guard the hero's ſon,
And prove that AGIS periſh'd not in vain.

AGESISTRATA.

Conduct me, Spartans, to his dear remains.

LYSANDER.

Forbear a while yon diſmal vault—*Enter* MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

My Lord,
The people, headed by the prieſts of Jove
And Hercules, in long proceſſion come,
Bearing the body of their royal lord,
From that baſe dungeon to the ſculptur'd tomb
Which guards the ſacred duſt of Sparta's kings.

Enter the Proceſſion with the Body of AGIS.

LY-

LYSANDER.

O Deſtiny ſupreme!

EUANTHE.

O ſad remains of youth and majeſty!

AGESISTRATA.

My ſon! my ſon!
Nature is thwarted here; thou ſhouldſt have borne
Thy aged parent to the ſilent tomb.

CHORUS.

Mourn, ye ſons of Sparta, mourn,
Pour the ſad lamenting ſtrain.
Wretched people! Land forlorn!
Mourn the beſt of princes ſlain.

Prieſt of JUPITER.

He fell not as the warrior falls,
Whoſe breaſt defends his native walls.
To treaſon AGIS bow'd his head,
And by his guilty ſubjects bled:
Betray'd by thoſe his mercy ſpar'd,
Ingratitude was his reward.

CHORUS.

Shame is mix'd with Sparta's woe,
Blood of kings the city ſtains.
Ever let our ſorrows flow,
Shame indelible remains.

Prieſt of JUPITER.

Yet AGIS triumph'd in his fall;
For Virtue triumphs over all!
Great, ſuperior to his fate,
He only griev'd for Sparta's ſtate.
When Jove decrees a nation's doom,
He calls their heroes to the tomb.
Fearleſs they fall, immortal riſe,
And claim the freedom of the ſkies.

CHORUS

CHORUS.

AGIS triumph'd in his fall,
Virtue triumphs over all!
Such a king ſhall ne'er return!
Our country and ourſelves we mourn.

Prieſt of HERCULES.

AGIS fell, by fraud o'ercome
Alike was great Alcides' doom:
Yet then moſt worthy of his ſire,
The ſon of JOVE, when wrapt in fire,
Victorious crown'd his labours paſt:
His nobleſt labour was the laſt.

CHORUS of all.

Now in peace our hero lies,
Ceas'd his toil, his race is run;
Freedom is the glorious prize
AGIS for his people won.

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD,

A King in bloom of youth, for freedom die!
Our bard, tho' bold, durſt not have ſoar'd ſo high.
This is no credulous admiring age;
But ſacred ſure the faith of Plutarch's page.
In ſimple ſtile that antient ſage relates
The tale of Sparta, chief of Grecian ſtates:
Eight hundred years it flouriſh'd, great in arms.
On dangers roſe, and grew amidſt alarms.
Of Sparta's triumph you have heard the cauſe,
More ſtrong, more noble than Lycurgus' laws;
How Spartan Dames by glory's charms inſpir'd,
The ſon, the lover, and the huſband fir'd.
Ye fair of Britain's iſle, which juſtly claims
The Grecian title, land of lovely dames,
In Britain's cauſe, exert your matchleſs charms,
And rouſe your lovers, to the love of arms.
Hid, not extinct, the ſpark of valour lies;
Your breath ſhall raiſe it flaming to the ſkies.
Now Mars his bloody banner hangs in air,
And bids Britannia's ſons for war prepare:
Let each lov'd maid, each mother bring the ſhield,
And arm their country's champions for the field.
Arm'd and inflam'd, each Britiſh breaſt ſhall burn,
No youth unlaurel'd ſhall to you return.
Then ſhall we ceaſe t' exult at trophies won,
In glory's field, by Heroes—not our own.
France yet ſhall tremble at the Britiſh ſword,
And dread the Vengeance of her antient Lord.

BRITISH MUSEUM 24.5.72